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SUBJECT: SRSG EIDE AND U/SYG HOLMES BRIEF SC ON AFGHANISTAN

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On July 9, the Security Council met to discuss Afghanistan, following the Secretary-General's special report on the outcome of the June 2008 Paris Conference. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Kai Eide and UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes briefed on the situation in Afghanistan. Afghanistan Foreign Minister Spanta, Pakistan Foreign Minister Qureshi and other delegations (including India, Canada and Iran) also addressed the Council. In his brief to the SC, SRSG Eide confirmed that UNSCR 1806 was sufficiently robust, and did not need further amendment. However, he called for more qualified personnel and financial resources to meet the UNAMA mandate. Eide said he was very pleased at the unanimous agreement of the SC on the success of the Paris Conference and the way forward with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the UNAMA mandate. He said the support for UNAMA was "more than encouraging," and noted that he senses a different attitude, one of a "readiness to be coordinated." U/SYG Holmes, who recently visited Afghanistan for four days, stressed four "serious and growing" humanitarian issues: food insecurity, Afghanistan's limited capacity to absorb millions of Afghan returnees from neighboring countries, an increase in civilian casualties, and Afghanistan's vulnerability to natural disasters. He said that PRT's engaged in humanitarian assistance increase the risks to civilian humanitarian actors, and called for the PRT's to provide relief only as a "last resort."

¶2. (SBU) Afghan FM Spanta stressed that the insurgency is sustained by a complex set of networks that cannot be defeated by military operations inside Afghanistan alone. He said that international terrorist networks constitute a common threat to Afghanistan and Pakistan and can only be defeated by a "coherent, integrated, regional, and global approach." He expressed his full support for and trust in UNAMA and SRSG Eide, and thanked the international community for financial, technical, and humanitarian assistance. Pakistan FM Qureshi expressed support for UNAMA but stressed that the mandate is "specific and limited to Afghanistan," and noted that any relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan would be handled bilaterally. Qureshi stated that Pakistan has taken several measures to prevent cross-border infiltration by terrorists and insurgents, but that the security environment in the frontier regions deteriorated sharply in 2007 when Al-Qaeda and some Taliban-linked groups turned on Pakistan and its security forces. He expressed Pakistan's support for the ANDS and emphasized Pakistan's \$300 million pledge for reconstruction and \$20 million pledge for the resettlement of Afghan refugees. While Council members were unanimous in their praise and support for the UN's effort in Afghanistan, China and Russia both expressed concern that ISAF operations have caused an increase in civilian deaths. Russia specifically mentioned civilian deaths caused by "faulty air strikes." End Summary

Remarks by SRSG Eide

13. (SBU) Eide discussed the increase in insurgent activities and condemned the recent attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul. In regards to the protection of civilians, Eide stated that he is in regular dialogue with the Commander of ISAF to develop ways to reduce civilian casualties, but underscored that insurgents continue to display total disregard for civilian lives. On a positive note, Eide reported that the Independent Electoral Commission decided to proceed with the voter registration process. He highlighted two critical components of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) - a massive institution-building effort and the expansion of agricultural production and energy projects. He noted that UNAMA had underestimated the humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan, particularly the emerging food security crisis. In his concluding remarks at the end of the session, SRSG Eide said he was pleased at the near unanimous agreement of the SC on the success of the Paris Conference and the way forward with the ANDS and the UNAMA mandate. He said the support for UNAMA was "more than encouraging," and he sensed a different attitude, one of a "readiness to be coordinated." He expressed his commitment to carrying out the mandate under Afghan leadership and at the service of the Afghan people.

Remarks by U/SYG Holmes

14. (SBU) U/SYG Holmes commented on his four-day trip to Kabul and Nangarhar and Kunar provinces in East Afghanistan. He described the humanitarian situation as "serious and growing," and said that the humanitarian community is finding it progressively harder to respond to humanitarian needs because of insecurity and lack of access. He cited 137 serious attacks on humanitarian organizations so far in 2008. Food insecurity fueled primarily by drought and the rise in global food prices (particularly the 58% increase in the price of wheat in 2007) is hurting Afghans badly. Holmes stated that 4.8 million Afghans in neighboring countries have returned home since 2002 (1/6 of the population), with over 140,000 returning home so far in 2008. According to Holmes, another 2.3 million Afghan refugees are in Pakistan and 950,000 are in Iran. The country's capacity to absorb these returnees is very limited. Holmes also called attention to the estimated 150,000 internally displaced Afghans. In regards to civilian casualties, U/SYG Holmes said that 698 civilian deaths have been reported by UNAMA so far in 2008, compared to 430 in the same period last year. Of those 698 deaths, 422 were attributed to anti-government elements, 255 were attributed to national and international military forces, and 21 were unattributed. Of note, the number of accidental deaths caused by international and national military forces decreased from 2007 to 2008. Children are frequently being recruited into anti-government fighting forces and have been victim to 228 school attacks in 2007 and another 83 school attacks in 2008. U/SYG Holmes cited Afghanistan's propensity for natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, droughts), as a contributing factor to the country's significant humanitarian needs.

15. (SBU) Holmes also expressed great concern about "blurred lines between military and humanitarian activities," specifically citing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) as an example in which military humanitarian assistance increases the risks faced by civilian humanitarian actors. He said PRTs should only provide relief as a last resort in cases where the security situation prevents civilian humanitarian agencies from doing so. Donors should channel money through mandated UN agencies and NGOs, and not through PRTs, Holmes said.

Remarks by Afghanistan FM Spanta

16. (SBU) FM Spanta noted the recent spike in terrorist attacks, the assassination attempt on President Karzai, the Kandahar jail-break, and the drastic increase in the loss of life in international military forces. He cited the "de facto truce in the tribal areas beyond the border," as a

major factor contributing to the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan. Spanta stressed that the insurgency is sustained by a complex set of networks that cannot be defeated by military operations inside Afghanistan alone. International terrorist networks constitute a common threat to Afghanistan and Pakistan and can only be defeated by a "coherent, integrated, regional, and global approach." Spanta welcomed the results of the Pakistani elections and noted that Afghanistan supports the democratic process in Pakistan and the expansion of friendly relations with Pakistan's civilian government. He acknowledged that narcotics and corruption undermine GOA's goals and create conditions of instability. The Afghanistan Cabinet agreed last week on the mandates and responsibilities of an anti-corruption monitoring commission. Spanta stated that Afghanistan would establish a special police force, special courts, and new attorney offices specifically designed to fight corruption. In regards to counter-narcotics, Spanta asserted that poppy production has decreased in 23 out of 34 provinces while the number of poppy-free provinces has increased to 16. FM Spanta called the Paris Conference a "landmark success," and thanked the international community for the \$21 billion pledge for the implementation of the ANDS. He expressed his full support for and trust in UNAMA and SRSNG Eide, and thanked the international community for financial, technical, and humanitarian assistance.

#### Remarks by Pakistan FM Qureshi

17. (SBU) Pakistan FM Qureshi expressed support for UNAMA but stressed that the mandate is "specific and limited to Afghanistan," and noted that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan would be handled bilaterally. Qureshi stated that peace and stability in Afghanistan are in Pakistan's vital interest since they enable Pakistan and Afghanistan to serve as a trade corridor between South Asia, Central Asia, China, and the Gulf. He emphasized that apart from the Afghan people, Pakistan has suffered the most from decades of conflict in Afghanistan - specifically by hosting over 3 million refugees, suffering from instability brought on by Afghan narcotics, and having to deal with instability in the frontier regions which has become more acute since 2001. FM Qureshi stressed that Pakistan has lost more soldiers than any other country in the fight against terrorism and extremism. Qureshi stated that Pakistan has taken several measures to prevent cross-border infiltration by terrorists and insurgents, but that the security environment in the frontier regions deteriorated sharply in 2007 when Al-Qaeda and some Taliban-linked groups turned on Pakistan and its security forces.

18. (SBU) Qureshi expressed Pakistan's commitment to cooperation with Afghanistan and Coalition Forces to stabilize Afghanistan, but reiterated that Pakistan will not allow foreign troops to operate within its borders. He asked Afghanistan to take the following measures to enhance operational cooperation: expansion of military deployments and checkpoints on the Afghan side of the border, real-time intelligence sharing, caution in the use of artillery and aerial attacks, supply of counter-insurgency equipment, more effective monitoring of the 40,000 daily legal crossings through the use of biometrics, and relocation of Afghan refugee camps close to the border from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Qureshi expressed Pakistan's support for the ANDS and emphasized Pakistan's \$300 million pledge for reconstruction and \$20 million pledge for the resettlement of Afghan refugees.

#### Statements by China, Russia, Iran, and Libya

19. (SBU) China and Russia commended the Paris Conference and expressed their support for UNAMA and SRSNG Eide, but expressed concern that ISAF operations have contributed to an increase in civilian deaths. Russia suggested that this increase is often caused by "faulty air-strikes." China also called for the international community to provide more aid to Afghan Security Forces to enable them to operate more independently. Iran, one of nine non-Council members who

requested to participate, expressed support for UNAMA and SRSG Eide, but called for more independence of Afghan security forces and greater ownership of Afghans over the security of their country. Iran also addressed narcotics trafficking, asserting that Iran fights against drug trafficking "with utmost seriousness and almost single-handedly." Libya expressed support for the Paris Conference and UNAMA, but emphasized that ISAF must do a better job safeguarding Afghan civilians and providing those who are imprisoned with fair and just trials as specified under international law.

#### Remarks by other SC Members and Non-Members

¶10. (SBU) Italy, France, Belgium, South Africa, Panama, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Burkina Faso, the UK, the US, Croatia, Vietnam, as well as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Turkey, the Netherlands, and Norway all expressed strong support for the priorities identified at the Paris Conference, the UNAMA mandate, and the central role of SRSG Eide. France, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), reiterated the EU's commitment to the Paris Conference and the final declaration published under the three co-chairs - France, Afghanistan, and the UN. The Indian PR lamented the loss of four Indians who were killed in the July 7 Indian Embassy bombing in Kabul, and expressed India's renewed commitment to working with Afghanistan to secure its stability and development. He added several pointed comments harshly criticizing those who harbor and train terrorists, saying they are no better than "the basest criminals." He also criticized "bargains for temporary and local peace" with terrorists and extremists because they "send mixed signals while the rest of us contend with the consequences of such deals."  
Khalilzad